

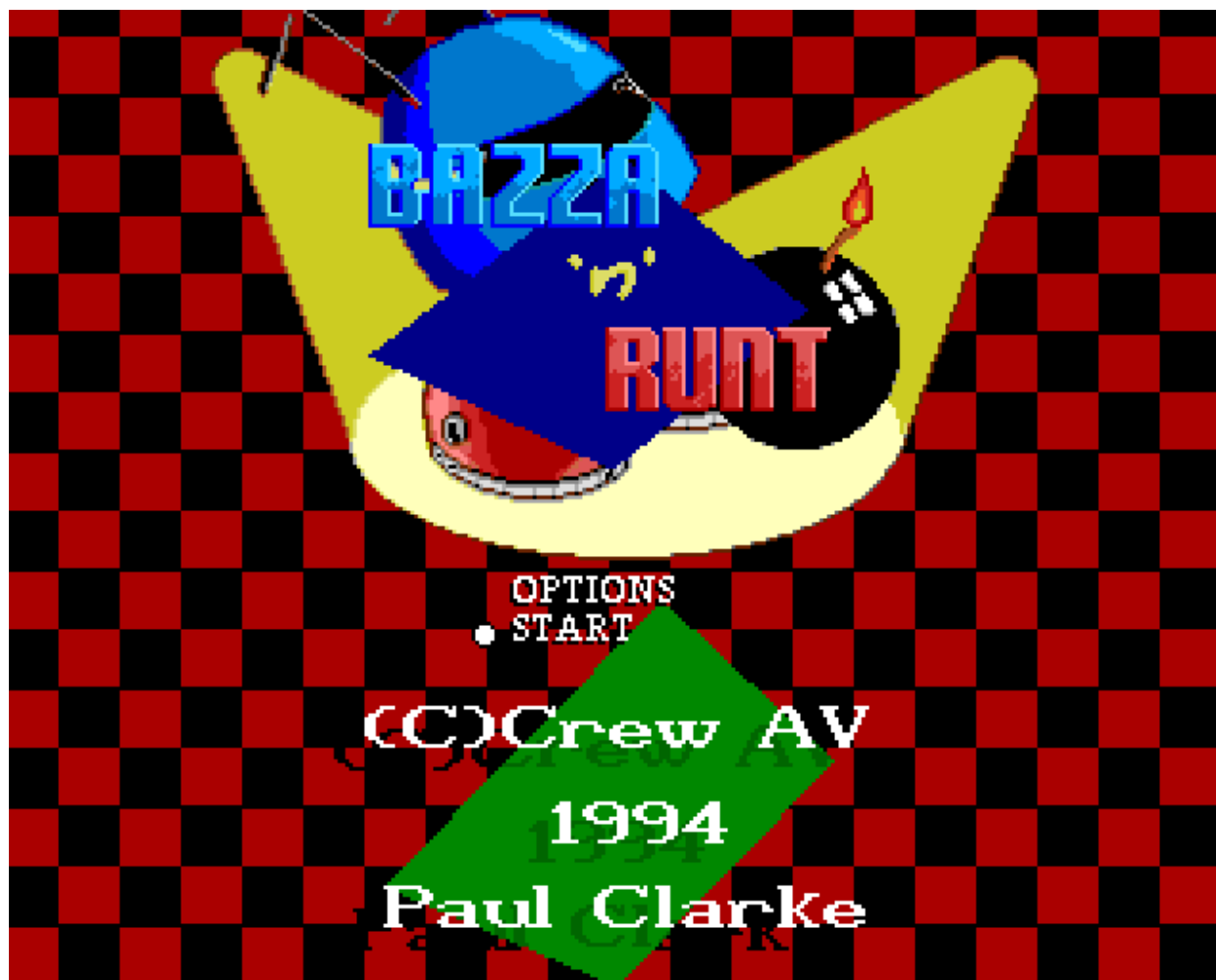
Homage fraise

Written by dreamkatcha. Any related videos, as always, can be found on my YouTube channel.

None of this would have been possible without the fantastic resources generously provided by immensely talented emulator authors, and communities such as Hall of Light, Lemon Amiga, Lemon 64, World of Spectrum, Moby Games, World of Longplays and Recorded Amiga Games. Thank you for your tireless dedication to preserving the history of gaming.

Here's a little known platformer from Magnetic Fields. One so obscure Andrew Morris and Shaun Southern don't even remember working on it. That's because they *didn't* - it was distributed by the *other* Magnetic Fields, the shareware and PD publishing house based in Preston, Lancashire. Later they also opened a computer shop known as FX Multimedia where they sold el cheapo software as well as the more mainstream, premium-grade variety. In fact, they were the self-appointed "No.1 source for computer hardware, software, accessories and systems in the UK". You can find the full story of Magnetic Fields' genesis if you look up the cached version of their defunct web site, fxmm.co.uk.

Paul Clarke was, in fact, the brains behind Bazza 'n' Runt, he did everything; the graphics, the sound and the coding. If he's not still working in the business, it's our loss - he did a damn fine job back in 1994. Nothing else developed by Paul is on record, if indeed it exists at all.



With a distinctly Qwak-ers vibe to proceedings, your simple objective on each level is to use bombs to blow up all the beacons without getting your helmet or running shoes killed. Whenever that happens you're whisked off to the next level by an umbrella, rather like in Parasol Stars.

As you've probably guessed from the title, it's a one or two-player game. Not one like Ruff 'n' Tumble that was initially intended to be, though *wasn't* in the end. There's no option to play with or against a computer-controlled player, so you'll need to have one of those humans to hand. Is Friends Reunited still around?



In two-player mode the difference is that you compete *against* one another simultaneously while the baddies remain a threat. As in the one-player game your goal is to destroy all the beacons on each level, yet now you have the additional bomb replenishing option of stealing those belonging to your partner.

Bazza 'n' Runt was reported to be an A1200 only title, except it's not an AGA game at all. An OCS/ECS system will do fine, yet you *will* need 2mb of chip RAM for no obvious reason. It certainly doesn't push any boundaries, despite being delivered on two disks rather than the usual *one* these kinds of games typically occupy.

Nevertheless, it looks wonderful and sounds good too. Actually perhaps Paul has tried *too* hard with the visuals - at

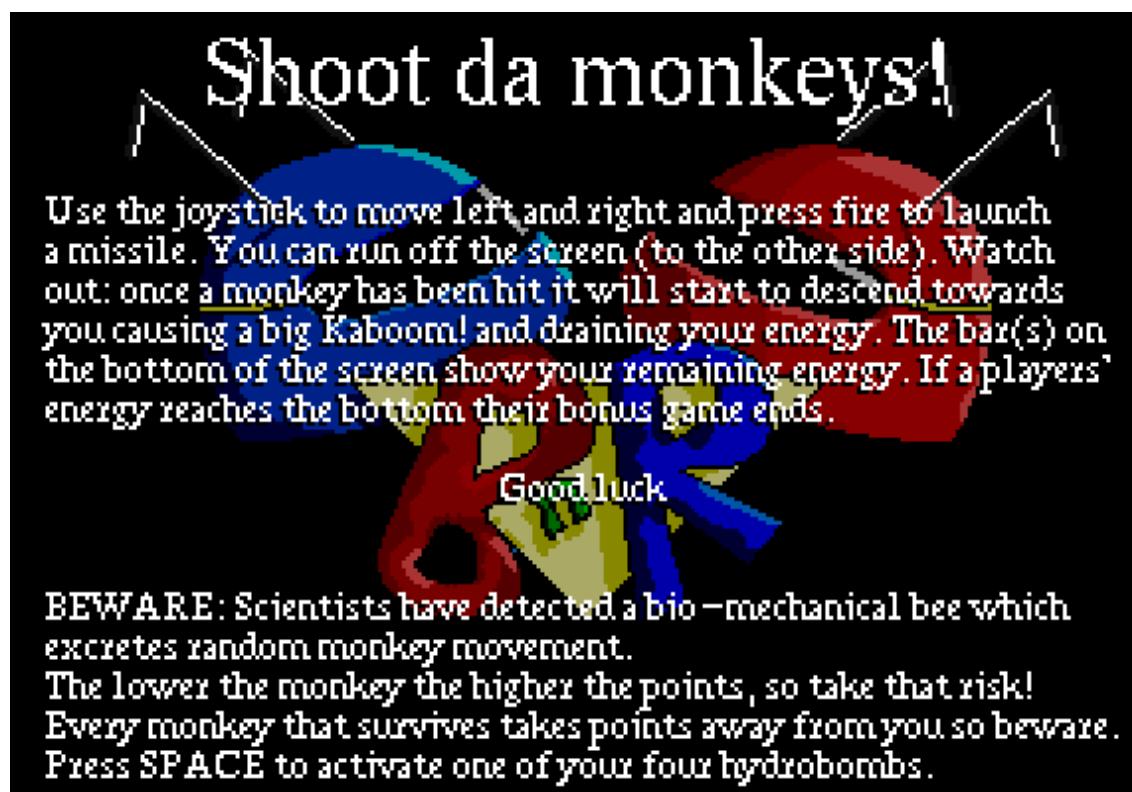
times there's so much going on, and the graphics are so bright and colourful it's easy to lose your sprite in the melee. Toning it down or introducing some more contrast wouldn't have gone amiss. Plus the protagonist isn't really as distinguishable from his adversaries as we might have liked, what with being drawn to a similar scale.

You'll note there's a Christmas themed level, which is always a welcome addition, especially when it can be spun off into a Yuletide playable demo and stuck on a cover disk. It's a shame then that the effect is diluted somewhat by the lack of similarly themed music. A funky-up Christmas carol would have done the trick to match the style of the rest of the game.



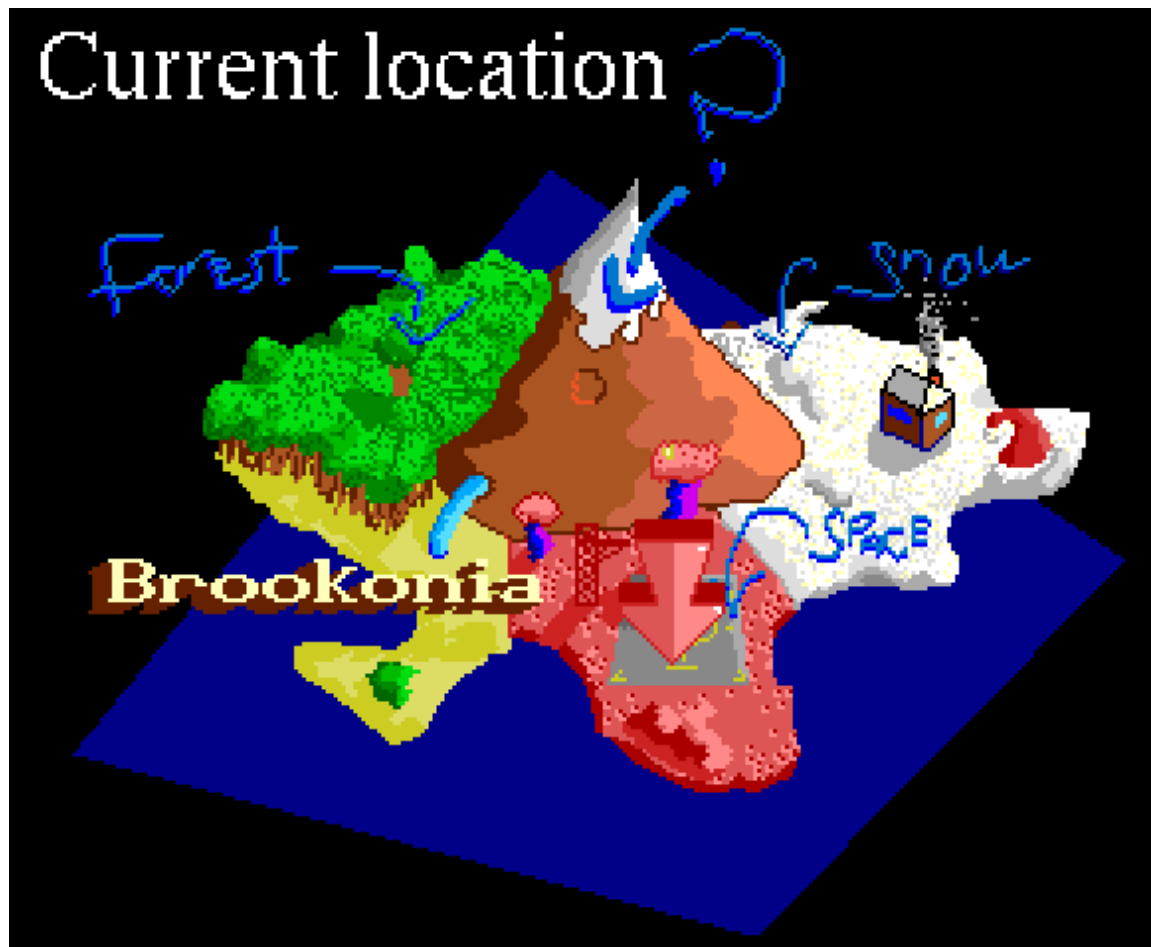
Bazza 'n' Runt is a Frankenstein's monster of old school platformers bolted together, so it's amazing that it doesn't feel stale and cliched. This was 1994 after all.

It employs a typical 'collect the bubbles' mechanic - seen particularly in Taito coin-ops - for power-ups, as well as to enter bonus games. F bubbles freeze all the baddies on-screen, while Es boost your energy (and the police try and tell us they're bad for our health!). Spelling out the magic word before the end of a level will take you to a bonus stage. Like the Duck Shoot inspired one for instance.





If you drop through the floor you'll automatically find yourself falling from the ceiling as in Qwak, and Bubble Bobble long before that. Parasol Stars too. It's a clever mechanic we've never really grown tired of.



Navigating the environments is also aided by handily located teleporters that allow you to work around the issue of not being able to jump high enough.

Continuously ascending spikes - similar to the handleless maces seen in Qwak, only in reverse - make an appearance once past the early levels. No idea what the spikey blue hedgehogs relate to though. :|



Certain sprites appear to have been plucked straight from other Amiga games by way of a homage, or maybe subconsciously via the power of suggestion. Who knows? There's Spud and the snail from Superfrog, for example. Paint bucket Spud from green to blue and miraculously you have Putty. Plenty of other sprites appear to be original creations. Pretty bizarre they are too.



Dizzy style fetch quest games are evoked during the cut scenes that drive the 'story', except they're more reminiscent of WizKid due to the quirky, offbeat humour. If I said you can expect to meet a chap called Dod.G Jon who offers you magic mushrooms and German sherbet, you'll get the gist.

Certainly is, last I heard he was in Snowland visiting Santa. One of my mates can take you there if you like. What do ya say?



Your ultimate goal is apparently to find 'Old Man Misty' who's hanging out with Santa in the South Pole for reasons that I must have missed. Oh no, wait, he *is* Santa. Again, *shrug*. Don't ask me.

The secret is....it doesn't matter. No-one reads the stupid things anyway! Come on, let's go and paint some washing machines



Oh Santa, I'm so honoured to see you, even if didn't
get me an Amiga 2500 with 6500 meg hard drive and the
super-duper poop your pants 200 MHz processor...



Boosting the challenge and pace, each level has a best-time to beat, tapping into the same trigger happy, twitch gaming field that makes 'one more go' coin-ops so captivating.

Just in case there's any doubt you're making an impact, comic book captions materialise whenever you dispatch enemies, accompanied by a raucous carnival of zany sound effects. You'll be thoroughly assaulted visually, aurally, *and* mentally. Hands up who knows what a 'razoo' is?



If all this head-mashing malarkey makes you want to lie down in a dark room, you'll take comfort in the provision of level codes, saving you the frustration of excessive replaying; a welcome addition since B 'n' R is a fairly long game with little variety to the gameplay.

Bonus items are either revealed by blowing objects up, or caught as they fall from the sky. These serve to top up your bomb capacity, or simply swell your score in the case of fruit. Always fruit isn't it? Studies have now been conducted to establish whether or not this encourages kids to eat more healthily... with mixed results. One analysis I read suggests it only makes us want to eat more, *generally*, and choices are most likely to be of the high-calorie junk variety.



Bazza 'n' Runt may not work as a weight management strategy, but it *is* a heck of a lot of fun, with a flat as a pancake learning curve. You'll need to supply your own syrup, chocolate sauce and squirty cream of course... and no doubt *will* after playing this.

BAZZA



RUNT

—The End—